



the burns and the subsequent treatment. *Id.* Plaintiff claims that Defendant Porter told him he could have checked the temperature of the water himself. *Id.* Defendants dispute that claim. *Id.* Plaintiff also claims that the infection resulted in the surgical removal of an infected bone in the right foot, causing “physical injury, mental anguish, and emotional distress.” *Id.* at 9.

### LEGAL STANDARD

When a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility brings an action with respect to prison conditions under any federal law, the Court may evaluate the complaint and dismiss it without service of process, *Ali v. Higgs*, 892 F.2d 438, 440 (5th Cir. 1990), if it is frivolous,<sup>1</sup> malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915A, 1915(e)(2). The same standards will support dismissal of a suit brought under any federal law by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility, where such suit concerns prison conditions. 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c)(1). A *Spears* hearing need not be conducted for every *pro se* complaint. *Wilson v. Barrientos*, 926 F.2d 480, 483 n.4 (5th Cir. 1991).<sup>2</sup>

### ANALYSIS

“[D]eliberate indifference to serious medical needs of prisoners constitutes the ‘unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain’ . . . proscribed by the Eighth Amendment.” *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976). Such indifference may be “manifested by prison doctors in their

---

<sup>1</sup> A claim is frivolous if it lacks an arguable basis in law or in fact. *Booker v. Koonce*, 2 F.3d 114, 115 (5th Cir. 1993).

<sup>2</sup> *Green vs. McKaskle*, 788 F.2d 1116, 1120 (5th Cir. 1986) (“Of course, our discussion of *Spears* should not be interpreted to mean that all or even most prisoner claims require or deserve a *Spears* hearing. A district court should be able to dismiss as frivolous a significant number of prisoner suits on the complaint alone or the complaint together with the *Watson* questionnaire.”). Dismissals may also be based on adequately identified or authenticated records. *Banuelos v. McFarland*, 41 F.3d 232, 234 (5th Cir. 1995).

response to the prisoner's needs or by prison guards in intentionally denying or delaying access to medical care or intentionally interfering with the treatment once prescribed." *Id.* Medical records showing sick calls, examinations, diagnoses, and medications may rebut an inmate's allegations of deliberate indifference. *Banuelos v. McFarland*, 41 F.3d 232, 235 (5th Cir. 1995). A delay in medical care to a prisoner can constitute an Eighth Amendment violation only if there has been deliberate indifference, which results in substantial harm. *Mendoza v. Lynaugh*, 989 F.2d 191, 195 (5th Cir. 1993).

Deliberate indifference "is an extremely high standard to meet." *Hernandez v. Tex. Dep't of Protective & Regul. Servs.*, 380 F.3d 872, 882 (5th Cir. 2004) ("We begin by emphasizing that our court has interpreted the test of deliberate indifference as a significantly high burden for plaintiffs to overcome."). A prison official acts with deliberate indifference "only if (A) he knows that inmates face a substantial risk of serious bodily harm and (B) he disregards that risk by failing to take reasonable measures to abate it." *Gobert v. Caldwell*, 463 F.3d 339, 346 (5th Cir. 2006); *see also Reeves v. Collins*, 27 F.3d 174, 176–77 (5th Cir. 1994). Unsuccessful medical treatment, acts of negligence, and medical malpractice do not constitute deliberate indifference. Nor does a prisoner's disagreement with his medical treatment, absent exceptional circumstances. *Hall v. Thomas*, 190 F.3d 693, 697–98 (5th Cir. 1999); *Stewart v. Murphy*, 174 F.3d 530, 537 (5th Cir. 1999); *Banuelos v. McFarland*, 41 F.3d 232, 235 (5th Cir. 1995); *Varnado v. Lynaugh*, 920 F.2d 320, 321 (5th Cir. 1991).

A deliberate indifference showing requires the prisoner to submit evidence that prison officials "refused to treat him, ignored his complaints, intentionally treated him incorrectly, or engaged in any similar conduct that would clearly evince a wanton disregard for any serious

medical needs.” *Johnson v. Treen*, 759 F.2d 1236, 1238 (5th Cir. 1985). A “serious medical need” is “one for which treatment has been recommended or for which the need is so apparent that *even a layman* would recognize that care is required.” *Gobert*, 463 F.3d at 345 n.12 (emphasis added).


Here, the medical reports indicate Defendants provided continued treatment to Plaintiff for his foot condition, including treatment for his infection and surgery. Even though Defendant Porter may have acted with negligence or gross negligence in failing to test the water temperature before Plaintiff was provided treatment, Plaintiff’s Complaint does not state a claim for deliberate indifference to his medical needs. The Court therefore **DISMISSES** Plaintiff’s Complaint.

**CONCLUSION**

For the reasons set forth above and pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915A, 1915(e)(2) and 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a), the Court **ORDERS** Plaintiff’s Complaint filed pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 be **DISMISSED** for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

**SO ORDERED.**

February 28, 2022

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MATTHEW J. KACSMARYK  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE